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Second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to the request of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2011/28, provides a preliminary assessment of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, including information about the regional preparations for the second review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, as well as regional and national policy developments subsequent to the first review and appraisal cycle of 2007-2009.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/28, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission for Social Development, at its fiftieth session, to include an analysis of the preliminary findings of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

2. Since the report was prepared prior to the submission of national review and appraisal reports to the regional commissions, the information presented herein is preliminary in nature and is by no means fully representative of trends at the national or regional levels. Given that the review and appraisal process is a regionally driven exercise, the report is primarily based on submissions received from the regional commissions and organizations of the United Nations and from civil society organizations, as well as on other information available to the Secretariat, in particular the draft of a publication, scheduled to be issued in 2012, to be entitled *The State of the World's Older Persons*, which is being prepared by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with HelpAge International, with contributions from 10 United Nations entities. The draft contains the results of extensive consultations with older persons on their quality of life and their views on progress in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action.

3. The report aims to provide a preliminary regional overview of priorities and status of implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, along with preliminary ideas for the focus of future regional efforts as reported by the regional commissions with supporting information from other stakeholders.

II. Second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002: the process to date at the regional level

4. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with funding and cooperation from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, has organized a regional training workshop to be held in Addis Ababa from 30 November to 2 December 2011. Representatives of 20 Member States from the region were invited to discuss national and regional efforts on the basis of their draft national country reports. The workshop will also provide an opportunity to discuss data collection and participatory approaches. The Commission expects participants to finalize their country reports by early 2012.

5. The working group on ageing of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was established to guide the implementation, review and appraisal of the ECE regional implementation strategy. The national phase of the second review and appraisal began in 2011, with guidelines on national reporting issued in English and Russian. The results of the national reviews were to be submitted to the ECE secretariat by the end of October 2011. National findings will be presented at a ministerial conference on ageing to be held in September 2012.

6. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is holding several advance preparatory meetings for the review and appraisal of the regional strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean (2003) and the Brasilia

Declaration (2007), which will take place in Costa Rica from 9 to 11 May 2012. On 9 and 10 November 2011, representatives of 22 Member States from the region and representatives from civil society and academia will take part in an international meeting on the follow-up to the Brasilia Declaration. Topics to be discussed included: public institutional arrangements and ageing; the human rights of older persons; social services and social protection; and research and training. An inter-parliamentary meeting on older persons also took place on 9 September 2011, organized by the Forum of Presidents of Legislative Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean and the Nicaraguan Legislative Assembly, with technical support from ECLAC. Additionally, the PanAmerican Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics, which is an academic forum, is organizing two working groups as part of the follow-up to the Brasilia Declaration, with the support of the Government of Argentina.

7. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is conducting a regional survey among Member States to assess new developments in policies and programmes since the first review and appraisal exercise. ESCAP has encouraged Governments in the region to use a participatory bottom-up approach in carrying out their national review and appraisal exercises, as called for by the Commission for Social Development. At the time of the preparation of the present report, the Governments of Armenia, China, Thailand and Viet Nam had confirmed that they were following such an approach.

8. ESCAP has organized a preparatory meeting to be held from 22 to 24 November 2011 in Beijing, to identify key priorities for the region and to determine the agenda for the Asia-Pacific high-level intergovernmental meeting on the second review and appraisal, which will be held in early 2012.

9. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is to hold its second regional review of the Madrid Plan of Action at a meeting in Beirut from 7 to 9 December 2011. Member States were being requested to: (a) prepare country reports for the meeting; (b) identify obstacles to implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action; and (c) produce recommendations for an agenda for further regional implementation. In the lead up to the meeting, ESCWA published a social policy brief entitled "Reinforcing social equity: mainstreaming ageing issues in the process of development planning in the ESCWA region", and issued a report on the demographic profile of older people in the region.

III. Policy developments: regional overview and priorities[1]

A. Economic Commission for Africa

10. Africa has the youngest population of all the major regions in the world, owing to continued high levels of fertility and mortality. However, the number of older persons in Africa, which stood at 56 million in 2010 and accounted for 8 per cent of the world's population aged 60 and older, is projected to increase faster than in any

[1] Section III of the report presents issues that were underlined by the regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as main priorities in their respective regions. This does not, however, preclude the fact that those issues are cross-cutting in all regions worldwide.

other major region, and to reach 215 million, an almost fourfold increase, by 2050.[2] As a result, the proportion of older persons will more than double, from 5 per cent in 2010 to 11 per cent in 2050. Among African countries, Mauritius had the highest proportion of older persons in 2010 (11 per cent), while Burkina Faso was the country with the lowest proportion (4 per cent).

11. In the face of many competing priorities, issues important to older persons remain low on national development agendas in the African region. Poverty and income insecurity in old age continue to be critical issues. The overwhelming majority of older persons in the region do not enjoy any social protection. However, some Member States, including Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland,[3] have introduced non-contributory social pensions for older persons. While these pensions contribute to reducing poverty among older persons who receive them, and allow those older persons to contribute to family income and stability, the overall number of recipients remains rather small.

12. Health infrastructure limitations in Africa add a particular burden to the daily lives of older persons. Access to primary health care remains both an economic and a physical challenge for large numbers of older persons. The situation is also compounded by the severe shortage of health-care personnel trained in gerontology and geriatrics.

13. In addition, there are numerous cases of widows being accused of witchcraft and subjected to violence and killing reported by civil society and the media across sub-Saharan Africa.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

14. Europe, home to 161 million persons aged 60 and over, 23 per cent of the world's elderly population, in 2010, has the oldest population of all major regions. The absolute number of older persons in Europe will continue to rise and is expected to reach 236 million by 2050. Europe will continue to have the oldest population in the world, with a proportion of older persons that is projected to increase from 22 per cent in 2010 to 34 per cent in 2050. In Europe, Finland had the highest proportion of older persons in 2010 (25 per cent), while the Republic of Moldova had the lowest proportion (16 per cent).

15. Recent age-related policies and priorities have centred on reforming pension systems, improving health care and developing long-term care systems.

16. During the first review and appraisal cycle, 12 countries of the ECE region reported that they had initiated, or completed, comprehensive pension reform.[4] Pension reform continues to be one of the hallmarks of recent policy adjustments. Major measures implemented and/or contemplated include: increasing the age at which one is eligible to receive an old-age pension; making retirement more flexible and gradual; pegging pension benefits to cost of living, rather than wage increases; reducing early retirement benefits; and encouraging private savings to self-funded retirement schemes.

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[2] United Nations (2011), *World Population Prospects*, the 2010 revision (see http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/index.htm, accessed on 10 October 2011).

[3] See A/65/157, para. 46.

[4] E/CN.5/2008/2, para. 12.

17. In several ECE countries, attempts at delaying retirement and exit from the workforce in the context of pension reform are hampered by the high level of unemployment. Increasing the labour force participation of older workers also rests on addressing age discrimination in the workplace, an issue that has so far received limited attention.

18. Reform of the health-care and long-term care sectors to meet the needs of older persons is another priority shared by all countries in the ECE region. Increasing attention is being paid to the quality of care both in institutions and at home. To that effect, many ECE countries now provide benefits to persons who take care of an older, ill or disabled family member. However, austerity measures taken by national and local Governments in the context of the ongoing financial and economic crisis seem to have translated into the curtailment of health-care spending and programmes of which older persons were major beneficiaries.

19. Emerging research suggests that abuse, neglect and violence against older persons, both at home and in institutions, are much more prevalent than currently acknowledged, and that prevention of such cases should be high on the policy agenda. "Ageing in place", through the provision of services and improvements to existing infrastructure, is another objective that is increasingly being considered by policymakers. Research also suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on long-term preventive approaches to a healthier life, through reducing risk factors in early life that lead to obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in later life.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

20. During the next few decades, the ECLAC region will experience a steady increase in both the proportion and the absolute number of persons aged 60 and over. The number of older persons in the region stood at 59 million and accounted for 8 per cent of the world's elderly population in 2010. That number is projected to reach 188 million in 2050. The proportion of persons aged 60 and over will more than double between 2010 and 2050, from 10 per cent to 25 per cent. Caribbean countries, including Cuba (17 per cent), have the highest proportion of older persons in the region, while Central American countries, such as Guatemala (6 per cent) have the lowest proportion.

21. National priorities identified during the first review and appraisal in ECLAC countries included the development of non-contributory pensions, increased coverage of public health care, the provision of free medication and the development or expansion of home-based health care. Some countries also reported initiatives to prevent abuse of, and violence against, older persons.

22. The growing number of national action plans and initiatives on ageing in the region since the first review and appraisal indicates that interest in ageing issues in Latin America and the Caribbean has gained considerable momentum. In recent years, ageing has been increasingly mainstreamed in national development strategies and social development programmes. Since 2008, several countries have also prioritized the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons and adopted legislation and/or made constitutional provisions to that effect. Some countries have also repealed provisions that have contributed to age discrimination.

23. The region is slowly moving towards a more integrated approach to issues of older age, and most countries have institutional arrangements to that effect in the form of directorates within a ministry of social affairs/development, institutes and/or councils. As a result, issues such as violence against older persons and the care and participation of older persons are becoming part of all programmes benefiting older persons.

24. While a number of organizations led by and focused on older persons have been established, the promotion of the participation of older persons is an area that has received limited funding. Additionally, the issue of older persons in emergency situations has received little attention to date, as illustrated by the particular vulnerabilities experienced by older persons following the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile in 2010.[5] Other areas in need of greater attention are old-age migration, growing old in rural areas as well as in urban settings, lifelong learning and access to productive technologies.

25. The lack of medical personnel who have been trained in geriatrics remains a large problem in the region, despite progress made in expanding the provision of formal training programmes at several universities. Additional specialized areas of geriatric health such as mental health, HIV and AIDS and older women's health are also in need of significant support. The provision of training for caregivers is common in Caribbean countries, but not in Latin America. Progress has also been made in institutionalizing the regulation of long-term care institutions, but regulations are often weak and poorly implemented. Finally, significant inequalities persist in the provision of services and benefits owing to economic, physical and cultural barriers.

26. Data and research are other areas that have received particular attention in this region. Nearly all Latin American countries have bodies dedicated to research on ageing issues, although they are rather heterogeneous in terms of research coverage, staffing and budget. In some cases, the research centres are small, and conduct small-scale studies that have limited impact on the national agenda. The availability of data on older persons has also improved, in part through the support of the United Nations, although the frequency and quality of data production, the issues studied and their accessibility vary across countries. Across the region, research on such issues as domestic violence, disability, access to technologies and voting patterns remains limited.

D. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

27. In several countries in the ESCAP region, the number of older persons is rising at an unprecedented pace, representing one of the most significant demographic transformations of the twenty-first century at both the regional and global levels. It is estimated that the number of older persons in the Asia-Pacific region will triple in the next 40 years, from 414 million — 59 per cent of the world's elderly population — in 2010 to 1.25 billion by 2050. The proportion of people aged 60 and over in the total population will more than double between 2010 and 2050, from 10 per cent to 24 per cent. In 2010, Japan was the country with the highest percentage of older

[5] See http://www.helpage.org.

persons (30 per cent) in the ESCAP region, while the Lao People's Democratic Republic was among the countries with the lowest percentage (5 per cent).

28. Issues relating to older persons continue to be high on the policy agenda of many countries in the region, in particular those with higher numbers of older people. Current policy priorities are similar to those which were the focus of attention during the first review and appraisal, although there are some significant differences in emphasis.

29. At the time of the first review and appraisal, emphasis was given to implementing health sector reforms to ensure health-care coverage, and to rising levels of abuse and violence against older persons. In contrast, the lack of social protection for a large number of older persons and the limited capacity to meet the rising demand for care services have dominated discussions at recent regional forums. Most countries in the region have traditionally relied on family care-giving and intergenerational living arrangements, and have been slow to act in the face of evidence that traditional support systems have been breaking down over the past decade.

30. The gender dimensions of ageing have gained greater attention in the region, particularly health issues faced by older women, their greater vulnerability to poverty, social isolation and violence and the care burden borne by older women.

31. Another topic that has received increased attention in some countries in Asia and the Pacific is the building of age-friendly environments, which include housing, infrastructure and public facilities.

32. In a number of countries, civil society organizations have actively engaged in organizing consultations and community mobilization so that the voices of older persons might be heard during the review and appraisal process as well as in the formulation of a national policy on ageing.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

33. While the population of Western Asia remains young, the region is on a fast-ageing track. In 2010, the number of persons aged 60 and older was estimated at 16 million — 2 per cent of the world's elderly population. However, this population is projected to more than quadruple in the next 40 years, to reach 69 million in 2050. The proportion of persons aged 60 and over in the region as a whole was estimated at 7 per cent in 2010, and is projected to increase to 19 per cent by 2050. Lebanon has, by far, the highest percentage of persons aged 60 years and older in the region (10 per cent) while Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have the lowest percentage (less than 2 per cent).

34. Several countries in the region have only recently recognized the importance of putting ageing issues on the development agenda. The focus of policies and programmes in Western Asian countries during the first review and appraisal was primarily on improving health services to older persons by increasing the number of specialized health-related centres, day-care centres, mobile clinics, medical personnel and medical devices, as well as the provision of medicines.

35. In the ESCWA region, social issues tend to be viewed from a social welfare perspective. As a result, programmes and policies generally target certain vulnerable

social groups, such as poor older persons and persons with disabilities. Most Western Asian countries continue to rely on the family to provide care and support to older persons and, until recently, tended to equate ageing policies with support to families. Homes for the elderly are not common, and, where available, are beyond the means of most older persons

36. Current national ageing policies continue to prioritize efforts to enhance access to essential services such as health care. However, the establishment and/or the enhancement of social security schemes are also increasingly under consideration. According to ESCWA, the bulk of health-care budgets is still spent on fighting communicable diseases, although chronic diseases persist. Training in gerontology and geriatrics is lacking in most parts of the region.

37. Across the region, civil society and/or faith-based organizations working in the area of ageing are very active, often with the financial support of — and in partnership with — Governments. Some organizations are contracted by Governments, including the Government of Egypt, to provide social services directly. Several countries have established national committees on ageing, comprised of representatives from both the public and private sector, to manage partnerships and oversee coordination with civil society.

IV. Overview of policy developments at national level since the first review and appraisal: older persons and development

38. The first priority directive in the Madrid Plan of Action covers issues related to the inclusion and participation of older persons in development, both as contributors and beneficiaries. The Plan of Action identifies several specific issues in need of particular attention from policymakers, in order to ensure the continued integration and empowerment of older persons in the context of rapid social and economic changes experienced by ageing societies.

Active participation in society and development

39. A major tenet of the Plan of Action is to fight against ageism and encourage changes in attitudes, policies and practices in order to achieve the goal of providing older persons with the opportunity to continue contributing to society within the framework of "a society for all ages". The Plan of Action also underlines the importance of the participation of older persons in decision-making processes related to ageing issues at all levels.

40. Since 2007, a number of countries have adopted new legislation that addresses age discrimination and the rights older persons, including the repeal of provisions that have contributed to age discrimination. One example of such legislation is the law for older persons that came into force in Nicaragua in 2009 and which, inter alia, established the National Council for Older Persons to ensure that the needs and concerns of older persons are taken into account in decision-making. Programmes that encourage older persons to participate in political, social and economic life, such as the Saudi Arabia national strategic plan for healthy ageing 2010-2015, represent another type of initiative.

41. As part of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, several Governments have consulted with civil society organizations in order to

ensure that the voices of older persons are heard. In the Asia and Pacific region, Fiji has adopted a bottom-up approach, recommended by the Commission for Social Development through the national Council of Social Services. The approach led to the recent "Community consultation on the national policy framework on ageing and the elderly" at which feedback was obtained from community leaders, non-governmental organizations and senior citizens.

Work and the ageing labour force

42. Another central tenet of the Madrid Plan of Action is the participation of older persons in labour markets for as long as they would like, and as long as they are able to do so productively. The Plan calls for implementing policies that increase the participation of older persons in the labour market in order to, inter alia, reduce the risk of exclusion and dependency in later life.

43. A growing number of countries have adopted laws to combat discrimination against older workers, for example in Uruguay, where, in 2007, the Government introduced the "*monotributo*" law, allowing retirees and pensioners with low incomes to continue to work. According to a recent review published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), some form of legislation against age discrimination in employment exists in approximately 50 countries around the world. However, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of such legislation in combating age discrimination. Effective means of publicizing relevant legal provisions and of monitoring and enforcing compliance are also needed if laws are to have an impact. Some countries have also launched informational campaigns to combat negative stereotypes held by employers.

44. Discrimination in hiring, promotion and access to job-related training[6] remains an important challenge faced by older workers. Older workers who lose their jobs tend to remain unemployed for longer periods than their younger counterparts. Some countries have started to tackle this challenge, including Hungary through its "START EXTRA" programme, begun in 2007, and its decentralized programme for the employment of disadvantaged persons, initiated in 2008. The programmes aim to provide older unemployed persons with help and assistance in finding employment. Similarly, Serbia has included the employment of older persons as an objective of its new employment strategy for 2011-2020, and also offers an exemption from social insurance contributions to employers hiring older workers. Initiatives and efforts to reintegrate the unemployed into the labour market are especially relevant to older persons and should be given priority in economic and social integration.

Rural development, migration and urbanization

45. The Madrid Plan of Action calls upon Governments to take rural demographics into account in designing and implementing programmes for food security and agricultural production. In many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, as a result of the exodus of young adults the rural population is markedly aged. However, few countries have implemented policies and programmes

[6] Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010), "Current Status of the Social Situation, Well-being, Participation in Development and Rights of Older Persons Worldwide", New York (unedited) (see http://www.un.org/ageing).

intended to improve living conditions and infrastructure in rural areas and to alleviate the marginalization of older persons.[7]

46. In 2009, Indonesia adopted a law on the protection of farming land for sustainable food production, which is a good example of legislation that mainstreams the special needs of older persons. Another notable example is the new pension system in China, initiated in 2009, which aims to improve the living conditions of the country's rural population and prevent the isolation of older persons in rapidly developing urban areas. In addition, the Government of China created a new pension system for urban residents in 2011.

Access to knowledge, education and training

47. The Madrid Plan of Action calls upon Governments to support and facilitate the access of older persons to knowledge and educational and training opportunities. Continuing education and training are an important component of an active and fulfilling life, and further ensure the productivity of both individuals and nations. Lifelong education and training are also critical for the participation of older persons in the labour force. Yet the level of education among persons aged 60 years and above remains much lower than among younger generations. As a result, older persons face challenges in adjusting to economic and technological changes.

48. Lifelong education for older persons has typically taken the form of "third age" Universities, in countries such as Argentina, Canada, China, Indonesia, Hungary, the Russian Federation and Serbia. For instance, in Argentina there is a specific programme, namely the University Extension for Older Persons (Extensión Universitaria para Adultos Mayores), which provides courses for older persons at national universities.

49. While there have been reports of small-scale, local-level initiatives that offer older persons training in information and communications technology (ICT), there are no such national programmes on record. However, worth noting is the case of Hungary, where recently implemented programmes aimed at improving ICT skills among the general population, such as the net ready programme (2007) and the e-Hungary programme (2004), have been successful among older persons.

Intergenerational solidarity

50. The Madrid Plan of Action posits that Governments have a special responsibility to promote a society for all ages, to which intergenerational solidarity is fundamental.

51. South Africa provides a good example of how generations can come together to share their cultural heritage. In 2006, the Oral History Project at the National Archives was launched to gather the stories of older persons who participated in key historical events in that country's recent history. More recently, the Government also promoted intergenerational solidarity through the draft national policy on the South African living heritage of 2009 and an intergenerational dialogue programme, which began in 2010.

[7] UNFPA and HelpAge International (2011), "Overview of available policies and legislation, data and research, and institutional arrangements relating to older persons — progress since Madrid", report compiled in preparation for *The State of the World's Older Persons 2012* (unpublished draft).

52. In the United States of America, resources were made available through the Older Americans Act to support intergenerational social and recreational programmes for older volunteers. The Act also supports services that encourage and facilitate interaction between school-age children and older adults. The European Commission is organizing the European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2012. The European Day of Solidarity between Generations is celebrated each year on 29 April.

Eradication of poverty

53. While the struggle against poverty among older persons is at the core of the Madrid Plan of Action, poverty among older persons continues to be largely ignored, despite the introduction of global and national poverty targets and policies. Actions aimed at reducing poverty among older persons should target the distinct causes of poverty in old age as well as their individual and household dimensions: malnutrition and hunger; access to basic services, including health, water and sanitation; and social exclusion.

54. Some countries, such as Belize, Cambodia, Mozambique and Serbia, have incorporated the needs of older persons into their national poverty reduction strategies. In Kyrgyzstan, the national strategy on poverty reduction of 2010 refers to old age as a period when people are particularly likely to fall into poverty.

55. In a number of English-speaking Caribbean countries, initiatives aimed at reducing poverty in old age include in-kind food subsidies to ensure the nutrition of poor older persons. For instance, in Saint Kitts and Nevis, the home care programme for older persons assists them in their homes with hot meals, food packages, medical assistance and social interaction.

Income security, social protection/social security and poverty prevention

56. The Madrid Plan of Action views social protection systems, whether contributory or non-contributory, formal or informal, as the foundation of economic prosperity and social cohesion, and critical to addressing the feminization of poverty in old age.

57. Although the lack of both social protection and income security is still an overwhelming problem for a large number of older persons, the recent past has witnessed a series of initiatives in several countries in the African and Latin American and Caribbean regions aimed at developing some form of social protection.

58. In Kenya, the draft national social protection strategy (2009-2014) includes social pension programmes to be developed in rural areas. These programmes are targeted at households headed by older persons with children under the age of 15. In addition, a cash transfer scheme has been instituted for older persons who are not receiving any kind of pension and who are caring for orphans and vulnerable children, including children with disabilities or chronic illnesses. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the "dignity pension" (*renta dignidad*), introduced through law No. 3791 in 2008, has established a universal non-contributory old-age pension.

59. Several countries in Latin America with low levels of social protection coverage have recently expanded non-contributory pension schemes for older

people. In 2008, the Government of Chile introduced a non-contributory tax-funded solidarity pension system for people over 65 who have lived in Chile for at least 20 years and whose private pension does not reach the minimum threshold of the solidarity pension. In September 2010, Peru launched a pilot programme of supportive care (*gratitud*), which provides financial support to persons over 75 years of age who are living in extreme poverty. The Bahamas and Anguilla have similar schemes.

60. In Asia, as mentioned above, China established a rural old-age pension scheme in 2009 and an urban pension system in 2011. Thailand established a basic universal social pension in 2009, available to persons over 60 years of age. In Lebanon, the Social Action Plan of 2007 has provisions for the expansion of safety nets for older persons living in poverty.

61. In developed countries, pension reforms have long been on the policy agenda. Australia, Finland, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have all recently reformed their pension systems. The ECE regional review and appraisal process will provide an opportunity to discuss and assess the impact of these reforms.

Emergency situations

62. The Madrid Plan of Action calls the attention of Governments to the vulnerability of older persons in emergency situations such as natural disasters. The Plan also emphasized that older persons can make positive contributions to emergency relief efforts as well as to rehabilitation and reconstruction.

63. The specific needs of older persons are generally overlooked in emergency situations. A study undertaken by HelpAge International in 2010 found that only 93 out of 1,912 humanitarian assistance projects surveyed explicitly addressed older persons as a vulnerable group.[8] Few initiatives have been reported in this area. In Kenya, the 2009 draft of the national policy for disaster management explicitly mentioned older persons. More concrete provisions are contained in Viet Nam's decree No. 13/2010/ND-CP, which provides for humanitarian aid and disaster relief programmes targeted to older persons. In the United States, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a "Preparing makes sense for older Americans" toolkit in 2011 as part of its emergency preparedness initiative. The Federal Emergency Management Agency also maintains local registers of older persons.

V. Advancing health: an imperative for well-being into old age

64. Good health is not only a vital individual asset, but is also crucial to the development of societies. In this context, access to preventive and curative care, the training of personnel and the adaptation of facilities to meet the special needs of older populations are key policy initiatives. Given the acknowledged importance of good health, efforts to expand and improve specific areas of health care for older persons have been established as a priority, although mainly in developed countries. Despite growing recognition of the issue of non-communicable diseases at the recent United Nations high-level meeting on non-communicable disease prevention

[8] HelpAge International (2010), study of humanitarian financing for older people, London.

and control, their connection to older persons and population ageing in the outcome document was tenuous.

A. Health promotion and well-being throughout life

65. The promotion of healthy living practices and equal access of older persons to health care and services that include disease prevention throughout the lifespan is the cornerstone of healthy ageing. Accordingly, the Madrid Plan of Action underlines three specific objectives: the reduction of the cumulative effects of factors that increase the risk of disease and consequent potential dependence in older age; the development of policies to prevent ill health among older persons; and access to food and adequate nutrition for all older persons.

66. In recent years, some countries have implemented programmes on healthy ageing and/or taken initiatives aimed at the long-term prevention of chronic diseases. In 2008, South Africa introduced Healthy Lifestyles Day, and subsequently introduced the "Active ageing" programme (2009/2010) and guidelines on the prevention and management of old age-related chronic diseases and other health needs of older persons. In 2009, Finland established a national advice and service network to promote the well-being and health of older persons.

67. Promotion of the health and well-being of older persons is also mainstreamed into wider national health policies. For example, the 2007 national health policy of Mozambique makes reference to older persons as a specific vulnerable group. In other cases, healthy ageing is mainstreamed into broader national development plans, for example in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where the national development plan "Living well" (2006-2010) refers to health promotion and healthy ageing. Similarly, in Lebanon, a specific programme aimed at expanding health coverage by targeting older persons suffering from chronic diseases was introduced under the social action plan of 2007.

68. In a majority of countries, however, healthy ageing is referred to only in national plans on ageing, not in corresponding programmes and policies. This is very often the case in the areas of nutrition and access to improved water and sanitation facilities.

B. Universal and equal access to health-care services

69. Investing in health care and rehabilitation extends the healthy and active years of older persons and increases their contribution to economic growth and social development. Unfortunately, older persons often experience financial, physical, psychological and legal barriers to health-care services. They also encounter age discrimination in the provision of health-care services because their treatment may be perceived as having less value than that of younger persons. The Madrid Plan of Action stresses that older persons are fully entitled to access to preventive and curative care, and calls upon Governments to set and monitor standards of health care as well as to provide health care to people of all ages.

70. Some countries have recently introduced significant reforms to policies or provisions in the area of health care for older persons. In Western Asia, for instance, Lebanon's social action plan of 2007 includes the expansion of health coverage for

older persons suffering from chronic diseases. In Asia and the Pacific, the Government of Viet Nam passed a law on the elderly in 2009, which stipulates that older persons aged 90 and above will receive discount rates for health services, even if they do not have health insurance. In addition, decree No. 13/2010/ND-CP stipulates that older persons who live alone, in poverty, or with disabilities, should be given priority in accessing health care. The 2007 national health policy of Mozambique accords free health-care eligibility to older persons.

71. Finland, one of the more developed countries, introduced a national framework for high-quality services for older people in 2008, with the objective of achieving better quality health care for older persons.

C. Older persons and HIV and AIDS

72. The Madrid Plan of Action emphasizes the importance of addressing HIV and AIDS among older persons. The Plan also calls for better recognition of, and support for, the role of older persons as caregivers to children and adults living with HIV and AIDS. The impacts of the disease on older persons are typically not addressed by public information campaigns, and older persons do not benefit from education on ways to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS.

73. The issue of HIV and AIDS among older persons is still largely ignored. Very few countries have developed new policies or programmes in recent years. However, some developing countries have mainstreamed ageing into their national strategic plans for HIV and AIDS, including Thailand, which, in its tenth national AIDS plan (2007-2011), included older persons as a specific target group for interventions. In some cases, only specific categories of older persons have been targeted, for example in the national AIDS strategic plan of Kenya (2009/2010-2012/2013), which focuses only on persons aged between 50 and 64. The Kenyan national reproductive health strategy (2009-2015), however, includes the promotion of awareness of all levels of health care with regard to the sexual and reproductive health needs of older persons.

74. In developed countries, in a new initiative by the United States, the White House Office of National AIDS Policy convened a meeting in 2010 on "Highlighting HIV issues among older Americans". Government representatives and civil society organizations discussed strategies that would enable them to realize the vision promoted by the President for a national HIV and AIDS strategy applicable to older persons.

D. Training of care providers and health professionals

75. The Madrid Plan of Action stresses that, as the number of older persons increases rapidly, the worldwide need to expand educational opportunities in the field of geriatrics and gerontology for health professionals, social service professionals and informal caregivers will become more urgent.

76. Despite some progress, the lack of professional and training opportunities remains a main concern for Member States, particularly in developing countries. In Western Asia, several countries have implemented training programmes in the field of geriatrics for physicians and nurses, such as in Saudi Arabia, where the

Government passed a national strategic plan for healthy ageing (2010-2015). Several Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Argentina, Cuba, Chile, Brazil, El Salvador and Belize, as well as the Netherlands Antilles, have now made training in geriatrics and gerontology widely available to health professionals.

77. In some cases, new specialized degrees in gerontology have been added to medical curricula, such as the graduate degree in community and institutional gerontology introduced in Argentina in 2007. However, the expansion of professional education in geriatrics and gerontology alone is not enough to have an impact on population health if facilities to access medicine continue to be scarce and if it is not matched by an increased number of students interested in this field.

E. Mental health needs of older persons

78. The Madrid Plan of Action called the attention of the international community to the growing challenge of responding to the mental health needs of rapidly ageing populations. Mental health problems are a leading cause of disability and reduced quality of life in older age. The timely and accurate diagnosis of such problems and their appropriate treatment can, inter alia, avoid unnecessary institutionalization. Strategies to cope with mental health diseases include medication, psychological support, cognitive training programmes, training for caregiver family members and care provider staff and specific models for in-patient care.

79. Mental health disorders in older persons, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia, are receiving increasing attention owing to the fact that the oldest of the aged, those 80 years and above, are the fastest growing demographic segment in many societies. As such, the number of people afflicted continues to rise. However, existing initiatives still fall short of meeting the Plan's call to develop comprehensive mental health-care services.

80. In Australia, the fourth national mental health plan (2009-2014) stresses the importance of collaboration with aged-care agencies, while resources have been allocated for the education and training of professionals through the national framework for action on dementia 2006-2010. More recently, the extended aged care at home — dementia programme has also commenced. France adopted its first Alzheimer's plan 2008-2012, which aims to increase awareness and early detection of the disease, as well as improve the care of persons suffering from it. In Singapore, psychogeriatric services have been provided since 2008 through the Singapore Institute of Mental Health. In addition, the Health Promotion Board of the Ministry of Health provides a public education programme on the mental health of older persons.

81. In the area of informal caregiving, Japan initiated a nationwide caravan to train, in a five-year period, one million people to support individuals suffering from dementia and their families.

F. Older persons and disabilities

82. The incidence of impairment and disability increases with age. Older women are particularly vulnerable to disability in old age owing, inter alia, to gender differences in life expectancy and disease susceptibility as well as gender

inequalities over the lifespan. The Madrid Plan of Action stresses that enabling interventions and environments supportive of all older persons are essential to promoting independence and empowering older persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of society.

83. Policies and programmes targeting older persons with disabilities are reported in a number of developed countries. Some of these initiatives come in the wake of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Australian National Disability Agreement of 2009 includes provisions targeting older persons with disabilities, as did its 2007 revision of the Home and Community Care Act of 1985. Serbia also established a new project in 2009 to improve services at the local level, which includes provisions for older persons with disabilities.

VI. Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

84. The promotion of an enabling and supportive environment for social development was one of the central goals agreed on at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. Further to that goal, the Madrid Plan of Action stresses that Governments must play a central role in formulating and implementing policies that foster such an enabling environment, while engaging civil society and older persons themselves. The primary objective of the Plan in this regard is the promotion of "ageing in place" in one's community, with due regard to individual preferences and affordable housing options for older persons.

A. Housing and the living environment

85. Housing, surrounding environments and transportation systems that are accessible and safe are critical to the social integration and participation of older persons.

86. Several developed countries have recently implemented programmes that facilitate ageing in place. In Australia, for example, provisions for a basic range of maintenance and support mechanisms to help older persons remain in their homes were included in the 2007 revision of the Home and Community Care Act of 1985. In Canada, the home adaptations for seniors' independence programme, which has been provisioned with financial resources through 2014, offers financial assistance for minor home modifications in cases where the occupant is 65 years of age or over. The 2010-2011 economic action plan has also allocated a significant budget to the construction of housing units for low-income seniors. Several developing countries have also introduced similar programmes and policies. For instance, in Viet Nam, the law on the elderly (2010) provides construction regulations to facilitate mobility. In Uruguay, Law No. 18340 of 2001 and 2008 makes provision for grants to make housing available to retired people.

B. Care and support for caregivers

87. In all regions of the world, particularly in developing countries, care of older persons is mainly provided by family or community. Even in countries with well-developed formal health-care policies, informal care plays a very significant and undervalued role. However, the lack of assistance or compensation to family

caregivers is creating new economic and social strains. Without such adequate support, family caregivers are often overburdened.

88. A number of innovative initiatives are being developed in many countries to improve the quality of care for older persons and alleviate the burden of care on family caregivers. In Hungary, the Government adopted a "one step forward" programme, which offers training courses for caregivers and establishes a care-allowance system. In developing countries, an example that deserves to be highlighted is the progressive care network for comprehensive care of older people in Costa Rica. The network attempts to integrate all actors involved in the provision of care to older persons, from the Government sector to the community, private sector and family members, in order to provide a holistic and coordinated set of services and benefits.

C. Neglect, abuse and violence

89. At the time of the Madrid Conference, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that between 4 per cent and 6 per cent of older persons worldwide have suffered from some form of elder abuse. Recent research, although patchy, suggests that the figures, inclusive of neglect, may be significantly higher.[9] Neglect, abuse and violence against older persons take many forms and occur in every social, economic, ethnic and geographical context. Some risk factors for elder abuse include social isolation, societal depictions of older persons and the erosion of bonds between generations. In many societies, older women are at particular risk of being abandoned and having their property seized when they are widowed. Institutional abuse occurs most often where there are poorly trained and/or overworked staff, and when care standards are low or inadequately monitored.

90. However, this issue has only recently received policy and legislative attention in some countries. In particular, much progress has been achieved in Latin America, through the development of specific protocols, institution-building and special programmes. For example, a very comprehensive system has been put in place in Mexico City, including: (a) a network for the prevention, detection and treatment of violence against older people, which works in close collaboration with social organizations; (b) an inter-agency group for the prevention, detection and response to violence against older persons, opened in 2005 and composed of 10 institutions that are currently working on a treatment protocol; and (c) a specialized agency for the care of older persons who are victims of violence, created in April 2010.

91. In other countries, elder abuse is mainstreamed into wider sectoral policies or legislation. In Belize, violence against older women is addressed within the framework of the domestic violence law of 2008. In Mozambique, the national five-year plan 2010-2014 provides for the development of actions against physical and sexual abuse of older persons. Other initiatives include programmes to promote public awareness of elder abuse, such as in Canada, where, in 2009, the federal elder abuse initiative organized a national awareness-raising campaign called "Elder abuse — it's time to face the reality".

[9] See, for instance, Age Concern New Zealand (2008), "Elder Abuse and Neglect" (see http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/files/, accessed on 1 October 2011.

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Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/13, provides an overview of the way in which the United Nations system, in partnership with Member States and other stakeholders, is coordinating efforts to mainstream disability into policies and programmes, and it recognizes that notable progress has been made in this regard. As the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals draws nearer, the report identifies critical opportunities to promote the inclusion of disability in the global development framework. In particular, the report examines the role of the United Nations system in accelerating efforts to mainstream disability in the global development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

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I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming disability in the development agenda (E/CN.5/2010/6), adopted resolution 2010/13, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission for Social Development at its fiftieth session on the progress made in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda.

2. In two previous reports to the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.5/2010/6 and E/CN.5/2008/6), the Secretary-General addressed the status of mainstreaming disability in the development agenda. The first report reviewed the practicalities and resources related to mainstreaming disability in the development agenda in the context of the newly emerging international normative framework on disability, following the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the General Assembly in December 2006.[1] The second report provided an overview of the status of disability-inclusion in international development cooperation within the framework of multilateral, bilateral and regional initiatives.

3. The multiple crises, economic, social and environmental, facing the world today further underscore the need for an international development agenda grounded in sustainability, inclusion and equality. The international normative framework on disability, consisting of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982), the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1994) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), provides a comprehensive and holistic approach for the inclusion of the disability perspective and persons with disabilities in all aspects of economic and social development. With the strengthened normative framework, the General Assembly reiterated, in recent resolutions, the urgency of including disability in all aspects of the work towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.[2] Despite the reinforced commitment of the international community, disability and persons with disabilities still remain largely invisible in development efforts and have yet to be included in the mainstream international development agenda.

4. As the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 approaches, the international community has begun to work towards a post-2015 development framework. The General Assembly decided, at its sixty-fifth session to consider the convening of a high-level meeting on disability and development at its sixty-seventh session. This initiative is expected to provide an invaluable opportunity to consider global strategies for disability mainstreaming towards 2015 and beyond, placing disability as an integral part of the future development agenda.

5. Successful mainstreaming of disability in development requires the commitment and action of all key stakeholders, including the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, Governments, civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, academic institutions and the private sector. The present report specifically focuses on and outlines the catalytic role of the United Nations system in mainstreaming disability in the ongoing global, regional and national efforts in the context of the Millennium

[1] General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

[2] General Assembly resolutions 63/150, 64/131 and 65/186.

Development Goals and in the post-2015 development framework. In particular, it examines strategic actions for promoting the mainstreaming of disability in the areas of data, statistics and knowledge on disability and development, multi-stakeholder partnerships and accessibility. These are considered prerequisites for ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their concerns in all aspects of society and development.

II. Mainstreaming disability in a global development context

6. Disability is a global concern. It affects individuals everywhere in the world and can happen to anyone at any stage of life. Current estimates indicate that over one billion people, or approximately 15 per cent of the world's population, are living with some form of disability. As a result of global trends in population ageing and a global increase in chronic health conditions, the incidence of impairment and disability among the general population is expected to increase. When the family members of persons with disabilities are taken into account, a much larger proportion of the population is affected by disability.

7. As detailed in the report of the Secretary-General to the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities,[3] disability is experienced disproportionately by those living in developing countries, and persons with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty.[4] Social exclusion and discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities create further challenges to the full enjoyment of their human rights and inclusion in development and render persons with disabilities more vulnerable in times of crisis, including the recent humanitarian, economic, food and other crises.

A. Disability and the United Nations development agenda

8. Over the last two decades, United Nations international conferences and summits have led to a globally shared vision of development, resulting in the adoption of an array of development goals, of which the Millennium Development Goals are an integral part. This vision has come to be called the United Nations development agenda. These global development goals, collectively focused on different dimensions of development, produce an evolving but comprehensive vision of and a strategic framework for development by addressing a broad range of issues, including poverty reduction, women's equality and empowerment, food and energy security, public health, governance and environmental sustainability.

9. The General Assembly has noted that it is impossible to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, without the inclusion and integration of the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in development efforts at the national, regional and international levels.[1] Furthermore, in the 2010 outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, Heads of State and Government noted that making

[3] A/66/128.

[4] WHO and the World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011).

development processes accessible to, and inclusive of, persons with disabilities is critical to attaining the Millennium Development Goals.[5]

10. The international community will have critical opportunities to ensure the inclusion of disability in the United Nations development framework even before 2015. In June 2012, the international community will gather in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio plus 20. The social pillar of sustainable development should be strengthened and the disability perspective should be included in the dialogue and outcome of the Conference, so that the international community, through its commitment to sustainable development, may not only harness the potential of untapped resources by including persons with disabilities to generate improved development outcomes for all but also to fulfil its obligations with regard to human rights.

11. Other critical opportunities include the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the concurrent processes for establishing a post-2015 development framework. The international community has already begun to consider a development framework beyond 2015 and has the chance to ensure that disability is included in any emerging framework.

B. Mainstreaming disability: the twin-track approach to promoting the disability perspective and the empowerment of persons with disabilities

12. Although the importance of mainstreaming disability in development is increasingly recognized, it is still necessary to elucidate what mainstreaming will entail in practice, both within the United Nations system and in its work with Governments, civil society and other stakeholders. The United Nations promotes the "twin-track approach" for equalizing opportunities for persons with disabilities, which consists of: (a) integrating disability-sensitive measures into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes and (b) providing disability-specific initiatives to support the empowerment of persons with disabilities. The balance between mainstreaming strategies and targeted-support should be tailored to address the needs of specific communities; but the overall goal should always be integrating and including persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development.

13. The twin-track approach to mainstreaming disability captures one of the overarching objectives of the work of the United Nations — the equalization of opportunities and the recognition of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of development. This notion of mainstreaming the disability perspective in development is detailed in the report of the Secretary-General in the fifth quinquennial review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.[6] Lessons may also be drawn from the efforts of the United Nations to advance the equality and empowerment of women through gender mainstreaming, which adopts a twin-track approach to gender equality and empowerment of women.

[5] General Assembly resolution 65/1.

[6] See A/63/183, sect. IV.A.

14. Since the adoption of agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming by the Economic and Social Council in 1997,[7] United Nations entities have made substantial advances in the integration of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their policies and programmes. In some cases, United Nations entities have also undertaken gender-specific measures, including the establishment of gender focal points, gender audits and capacity development initiatives, to support gender equality.[8]

15. While United Nations entities are also taking important steps to mainstream disability in their policies and programmes, challenges remain.[9] A review of the United Nations common country development frameworks[10] at the country level from 1997-2010 found that while some countries have included a reference to persons with disabilities in their national development priorities, it is always in the context of initiatives to support disability-specific programming rather than mainstreaming of disability in the general system of services and facilities made available to the rest of society.[11] These findings present a starting point for strengthening mainstreaming of disability and a baseline for measuring progress.

III. The role of the United Nations system in promoting a disability-inclusive global development agenda

16. Over the last three decades, the United Nations has reiterated the essentiality and centrality of the premise that the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities in society and development is a prerequisite for the realization of human rights, peace and security. In that context, the international community has long recognized that the inclusion of persons with disabilities, as both agents and beneficiaries, is an essential condition for inclusive development.[12]

17. Some progress has already been made by the United Nations system in mainstreaming disability in its work, based on the international normative framework on disability and development, which has been strengthened by the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[13] For example, progress in advancing evidence-based approaches to advancing the mainstreaming of disability in development is shown in the publication of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, *World Report on Disability* in 2011.[4]

18. Despite this important benchmark, the findings of the report also indicate that the international community still faces major challenges to the inclusion of disability as an integral part of the mainstream development agenda.

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[7] A/52/3/Rev.1, chap. IV.A, agreed conclusions 1997/2.

[8] E/2010/57, para. 52.

[9] See A/66/128.

[10] The review looked at the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, which is explained in section III below.

[11] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Baseline review on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities into United Nations country level programming", 2010 (http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/baseline_study_2010.doc).

[12] World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, see A/37/351/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex, sect. VIII, recommendation 1 (iv).

[13] See A/65/173.

A. Mainstreaming disability in the United Nations operational framework for development

19. Within the United Nations system, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, comprised of over 25 entities of the United Nations system, serves as an effective mechanism for promoting a coordinated and coherent, system-wide approach towards integration of the rights of persons with disabilities into development. The Inter-Agency Support Group utilizes the strengths and comparative advantages of the different entities of the United Nations system, engaged at the global, regional and national levels.

20. In an effort to integrate disability into the overall United Nations operational framework for development, the Inter-Agency Support Group has worked closely with the United Nations Development Group, which unites 32 entities of the United Nations system that play a role in development. The objective of the Development Group is to enhance coordination within the United Nations system to deliver more coherent, effective and efficient support to Member States seeking to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.[14]

21. In October 2010, the United Nations Development Group endorsed a "Guidance note on integrating the rights of persons with disabilities in United Nations programming at the country level" for United Nations country teams, which was developed by a joint United Nations Development Group/Inter-Agency Support Group task team established by the Development Group's Working Group on Programming Issues.[15] The guidance note is intended to strengthen coordination of efforts to mainstream disability in the joint planning and implementation of programmes at the country level. It offers practical guidelines and outlines entry points for integration of disability in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, the main common country operational framework for United Nations development programmes at the country level.

22. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework, when fully articulated, describes in its narrative and its results matrix the outcomes that the United Nations system is committed to deliver in support of the development priorities of a specific Government. The effective implementation of the guidance note would ensure that countries are set on the path of disability mainstreaming in alignment with national development priorities and the goals pertaining to the international global development agenda.

23. New and recent United Nations initiatives relating to human rights and development cooperation also present opportunities to advance the mainstreaming of disability. These include the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Development Group human rights mainstreaming mechanism, the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council and the Council's annual ministerial review.

24. In the course of its four sessions to date, the Conference of States Parties has established itself as a unique global forum for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. The steady increase in participants from the United Nations system,

[14] See www.undg.org.

[15] For a copy of the guidance note see http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=16.

civil society, academic and research institutions and financial institutions, and in observers from around the world, demonstrates the utility of the forum in terms of advancing disability issues. In particular, participants and observers, given broad participation in the Conference, enjoy the opportunity to explore options for multi-stakeholder partnerships towards the goal of mainstreaming disability in all aspects of society and development.

25. The United Nations Development Group human rights mainstreaming mechanism is a relatively new initiative that aims to strengthen the capacity of United Nations funds, agencies and programmes to engage in human rights-related activities at the country level.[16] It offers an opportunity to integrate disability principles relating to the inclusion of human rights in United Nations operational activities for development into the advocacy efforts of the United Nations Development Group.[17]

26. Attainment of the goal of mainstreaming disability in the global development agenda requires that the interlinkages between disability and global development priorities, including poverty reduction, climate change, sustainable development, financing for development and development cooperation, should be promoted at a substantive level. Realization of this goal requires strategic interdepartmental and cross-sectoral efforts to influence and collaborate with Member States and other relevant actors.

27. From this perspective, the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council both present entry points for advocacy efforts to promote disability-inclusive development by transforming the framework for development cooperation and, in particular, by eliminating built-in disability-discriminatory biases, whether legal, attitudinal or environmental.

28. Furthermore, as a principal forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on development cooperation at a global level, the Development Cooperation Forum can facilitate different channels of cooperation in the area of disability, including through development assistance, multilateral or bilateral aid, South-South or triangular cooperation and other technical cooperation, as discussed in section IV below.

B. Coordination of efforts across the United Nations system for mainstreaming disability in development

29. While disability is gaining more prominence in the mandates of individual organizations of the United Nations system, there is a growing need to harness the expertise from across the United Nations system and to foster concerted efforts to create synergies in order to effectively mainstream disability in all development efforts.

30. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is the global focal point on disability for the United Nations system. The Department and the Office of the

[16] The mechanism was established pursuant to a recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

[17] See http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1452.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as the co-chairs of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, have taken initiatives and actions in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Governments and civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, the private sector and academia, to coordinate the strategic efforts of the United Nations system in the field of disability.

31. In order to raise awareness on disability as a cross-cutting development issue, and with a view to promoting evidenced-based approach to policy development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has conducted a number of studies[18] on mainstreaming disability in development in the past three years, including panel discussions, focusing on mainstreaming disability in international cooperation, held in conjunction with the Commission for Social Development at its forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions. In addition, various initiatives have been undertaken to identify strategic policy frameworks and entry points for mainstreaming disability and to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, addressing issues ranging from disability-inclusive development cooperation to disability-inclusive AIDS programming,[19] from education for children with disabilities to women with disabilities in conflicts, and from empowering persons with disabilities through sports[20] to disability-inclusive disaster management.[21]

32. For example, in an effort to promote the inclusion of disability in the context of poverty eradication efforts, a panel discussion[22] was co-organized with the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development, in collaboration with the Governments of Finland, Japan and Norway, the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Disability and Development, at which good practices of disability-inclusion in development were shared, with a view to contributing to successful poverty eradication and development for all. In March 2011, a seminar on "Mainstreaming disability in development cooperation"[23] was organized by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development and with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to examine challenges faced in mainstreaming disability in development cooperation policies and programmes. For the past two years, the annual International Day of Persons with

[18] Both A/66/121 and A/66/128 were based on original research conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

[19] The Department of Economic and Social Affairs collaborated with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) in organizing the side event to the High-level Meeting on AIDS in June 2011, to enhance integration of an inclusive and accessible approach to AIDS programming for persons with disabilities (further information is available at: http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1572).

[20] See http://www.un.org/disabilities.

[21] During the International Donors' Conference on Haiti in March 2010, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a panel discussion entitled "Haiti: Reconstruction for All", which was co-sponsored by the Global Partnership for Disability and Development, the Government of Canada, the World Bank and Disabled Peoples' International.

[22] "Mainstreaming disability in development for poverty eradication" in February 2011 in New York (further information is available from http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/events/csocd49panel.pdf).

[23] The full report is available from http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/4/Mainstreaming_Disability_in_Development.pdf.

Disabilities has been observed, in collaboration with the United Nations system and key stakeholders, under the theme of mainstreaming disability in development, to raise awareness of the importance of disability-inclusive development and to mobilize strategic partnerships.

33. The Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted a joint strategy and plan of action,[24] which has been developed for concerted action towards mainstreaming disability by the United Nations system. With efforts to mainstream disability gaining momentum, the membership of the Inter-Agency Support Group has expanded markedly in the last two years, and it currently includes the United Nations regional commissions.

34. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, together with relevant stakeholders from both within and outside the United Nations system, has also been supporting efforts to enhance national and institutional capacities through technical cooperation. For example, a capacity-development workshop was co-organized with OHCHR in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in November 2010 in Trinidad and Tobago. In September 2011, at the request of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office in Croatia, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OHCHR conducted a workshop on the implementation of the Convention for Western Balkan countries. At the workshop, global experts from academic institutions[25] collaborated to share good practices regarding disability inclusion. They explored ways to build national and institutional capacity in Balkan States with a view to enhancing coherence and coordination between line ministries, as well as between Government agencies and civil society organizations. In June 2010, a United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Accessibility: Innovative and cost-effective approaches for inclusive and accessible development[26] was organized, in collaboration with the World Bank. The meeting identified policy-oriented recommendations and priority actions for strengthening capacities to promote disability-inclusive development.

IV. Looking forward: strategies for promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development

A. Strengthen data, statistics and knowledge on disability and development

Disability data and statistics

35. Disability statistics can reveal the experiences and situations of persons with disabilities. In particular, data that are disaggregated on the basis of demographic features such as sex and age or socio-economic status (including factors such as education and employment), can provide a crucial factual basis for all stages of the

[24] The joint strategy and plan of action is comprised of seven goals, which constitute the basis for concerted and coordinated support by the United Nations to Member States in their implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

[25] Including the University of Southern California and the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, University College, University of London.

[26] The full report of the meeting is available from http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1516.

effective development of policy design and implementation. It is also an essential element of accurate monitoring and evaluation to assess the degree to which policies, projects or approaches have succeeded or failed.

36. The General Assembly has reiterated the need for strengthening the collection and compilation of national data and information about the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of realizing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities[27] following existing guidelines on disability statistics.

37. The report of Secretary-General to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Keeping the promise: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond (A/65/173), reviewed the status of data collection and statistics on disability. As noted in that report, there has been in the collection of improved disability data some progress at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. At the same time, there is still the need for States to collect and report disability data and statistics in a more proactive manner. This conclusion was supported by the findings of the *World Report on Disability*,[4] published by the World Bank and WHO in 2011, which provided several recommendations on strengthening data collection at international and national levels.

38. It therefore remains important for the United Nations system to work with Governments to support the development of national capacity to collect disability data and statistics, as well as to promote the gathering of information regarding the situation of persons with disabilities in national-level data-collection efforts, including censuses. Data collection at the national level, in particular, should follow internationally established concepts and methodologies that allow international comparison.

39. Periodic assessments of the state of statistics and analysis of disability would provide further guidance to key stakeholders regarding data collection. In this regard, it is worth noting that the United Nations Statistics Division produces a number of publication series on other specific issues that provide the latest information on their respective topics. These include *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*,[28] which has provided a foundation for the pursuit of the equality of women as a mainstream development issue. At the regional level, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has published three editions of *Disability at a Glance*,[29] which provide a snapshot of disability statistics and information in the region, including with regard to the population of persons with disabilities and national policy, programmes and institutional mechanisms on disability matters. Through the preparation of a similar periodic report at the global level on the situation of persons with disabilities in economic and social development, Member States and relevant United Nations entities, together with other stakeholders, could contribute substantially to mainstreaming disability in the development agenda.

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[27] Recent examples include General Assembly resolutions 65/186, para. 13, 64/131, para. 10 and 63/150, para. 5.

[28] *The World's Women* was first published in 1991. The 2010 edition is the fifth in the series.

[29] ST/ESCAP/2421 (2004), ST/ESCAP/2513 (2009) and ST/ESCAP/2583 (2010).

Research and good practices

40. Evidence-based research on specific disability issues and on the situation of persons with disabilities could improve understanding of their needs and the barriers they face. The United Nations system has made substantial contributions in this area. Notably, as discussed in the preceding section, WHO and the World Bank launched the *World Report on Disability* in June 2011.[4]

41. The compilation and sharing of well-documented best practices at the national, regional and international levels can also contribute to effective approaches to development by informing stakeholders of strategies that have worked elsewhere and about barriers faced and lessons learned in relevant projects. In its resolution 65/186, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to "provide information on best practices at international, regional, subregional and national levels for including persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts".

42. In response to that request, in 2011, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs produced an initial set of criteria for best practices,[30] including a compilation of "prototype" case studies by way of example, to launch an official call for further case studies to all stakeholders in preparation for the proposed high-level meeting on disability and development to be held during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

43. In addition to the initiative by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, academic institutions and civil society organizations have made excellent contributions to the compilation of good practices. These include the ongoing initiative for a global database by the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre at the University of London and the World Bank, as well as the "Making it Work" initiative, launched by Handicap International.

44. The utility of statistical data, research publications and information on best practices is maximized by their broad dissemination. Effective distribution includes making such materials and information, as well as international instruments such as the Convention, the standardized rules and the programme of action, as widely available in languages and accessible formats as possible.

Capacity-building of key stakeholders

45. To accelerate the mainstreaming of disability in development, key stakeholders must be informed and aware of the situation of persons with disabilities, as well as their rights and corresponding responsibilities as set out in international norms and instruments. Stakeholders must also have relevant technical skills, for example with regard to the gathering of appropriate disability statistics. The development of educational and guidance materials and the carrying out of training sessions for key stakeholders are therefore of great importance. In this regard, the development by

[30] The criteria set out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for a best practice example are that it must: adopt a rights-based approach; be results-based and produce a measurable change; ensure equality and be non-discriminatory; recognize the interaction between gender and disability; increase awareness and understanding of disability; be accessible in the widest sense to people with all disabilities; be participatory, actively and meaningfully involving persons with disabilities in all matters concerning them; be accountable to persons with disabilities; be appropriately resourced; be sustainable; be replicable; and involve effective partnerships. For further information, see CRPD/CSP/2011/CRP.1.

the Inter-Agency Support Group and the United Nations Development Group of a guidance note on including the rights of persons with disabilities in United Nations programming at the country level for United Nations country teams and implementing partners, as discussed above, is a particularly valuable resource to support the mainstreaming of disability.

46. As discussed in the report of the Secretary-General to the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities (A/66/128), a number of organizations of the United Nations system have undertaken substantial efforts to strengthen the capacity of their staff members to deal with disability issues and to encourage the inclusion of disability in their respective areas of work. However, in order to achieve full integration of the disability perspective in international development efforts, capacity-building efforts for both awareness raising and the development of technical skills should be scaled up to address the current gaps among staff members of the United Nations system, at all levels, as well as civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, Government officials and those in the private sector.

B. Promote and strengthen international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships

47. International cooperation is an important vehicle for the mainstreaming of disability in the context of multi-stakeholder networks. International cooperation promotes public awareness and advocacy, fosters disability-sensitive national policies and programmes, builds a solid knowledge based on the situation of persons with disabilities, supports the assessment of national capacity gaps and enables the evaluation and monitoring of the impact of development policies and programmes on persons with disabilities and on their communities.

48. To date, the full potential of mainstreaming disability in international cooperation remains to be realized.[31] Evidence shows that, while several development agencies have made progress in mainstreaming disability in their policies and guidelines on development cooperation, most have yet to take the "twin-track approach" to mainstream disability across all their policies and guidelines, although many have some experience with initiatives that support disability-specific programmes.

Disability mainstreaming in international cooperation

49. Increasingly, the international community is using multiple international development cooperation frameworks, including South-South cooperation, which provides a new framework and modality for different forms of partnership-building, in pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

50. Mainstreaming disability is a new concept for many countries and remains a major challenge, especially in the case of developing countries. South-South cooperation provides an opportunity to develop an efficient modality to promote the inclusion of disability in development cooperation among countries facing similar

[31] See A/CN.5/2010/6.

concerns and challenges. It can maximize the available data, statistics and information, expertise and resources to enhance the sustainability of efforts to mainstream disability. It can also renew the incentive to promote disability-sensitive development processes at the local/regional level. Furthermore, development agencies could capitalize on the experience of triangular cooperation to bridge the gap between the inclusion of disability in South-South cooperation and traditional North-South cooperation.

51. Many regional and subregional partnerships for development cooperation have expressed the need to address the concerns of persons with disabilities in efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. During the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Caribbean Community, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Southern African Development Community emphasized the importance of disability-inclusive economic and social development, in particular with regard to access to social services, programmes and training for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. This represents a promising start towards enhancing coordination in mainstreaming disability within the context of regional and subregional development cooperation frameworks. In this regard, there is a role for the United Nations in consolidating current efforts. For example, international cooperation on the subject could be established between the United Nations and the Organization of American States which has adopted the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.[32]

52. It is recognized that the recent trends in international cooperation provide both opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming disability. The new aid modalities, such as sector-wide approaches and direct budget support, place greater emphasis on nationally driven priorities and planning processes to achieve the internationally agreed development goals aimed at achieving greater donor harmonization and alignment for the use of aid, as expressed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005. As international cooperation becomes increasingly demand-driven, the role of persons with disabilities and their organizations, as both agents and beneficiaries at all levels of national decision-making processes, is also becoming more prominent. Hence, it is more important than ever to intensify efforts to promote national capacity-building, both of persons with disabilities and their organizations and of Governments and policymakers, to enable them to fulfil their roles in implementing national development priorities.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

53. The multidimensional nature of disability that governs multi-stakeholder partnerships, in which each partner's efforts and outputs complement the efforts of the others, is essential to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can help to strengthen ownership and accountability, and thereby increase both the scale and effectiveness of disability-inclusive development projects and programming.

54. Over the past several years, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development, founded by the World Bank,[33] has served as an important mechanism

[32] Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/sigs/a-65.html).

[33] See http://www.gpdd-online.org.

in enhancing the sharing of knowledge and capacity-building efforts for promoting disability in development. The Global Partnership is particularly effective in the area of development cooperation, through engagement with the United Nations system and other stakeholders, working at all levels with development agencies, financial and academic institutions and organizations of person with disabilities.

55. Strengthening partnerships between global and national partners opens up new opportunities and approaches to mainstreaming disability by capitalizing on the strengths of each partner in order to achieve the optimal outcome for persons with disabilities in a given economic, social, cultural and political setting. Greater sensitivity to sociocultural, economic and political diversity can improve strategies for disability-inclusive development.

56. Recognizing that socially inclusive development processes have emerged as a priority for many development partners, a concerted effort could be made to expand partnerships, including those stakeholders that have had successes in mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women.

57. Efforts in furthering the goal of disability-inclusive development have also been made through strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the private sector. In 2010, the Disability Resource Team of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its Bureau for Employers' Activities established the ILO Global Business and Disability Network in order to share knowledge, develop joint products (such as an enhanced database of disability laws), strengthen employers' networks and link companies and other groups to country-level ILO or other disability activities.

58. At the Secretariat level, the Global Compact Office has worked to expand system-wide cooperation with the business community.[34] It could provide an important entry point for United Nations efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive development.[35]

C. Create enabling and accessible environments for persons with disabilities and their communities

59. Environment influences a person's experience, either as a barrier or a catalyst. Persons with disabilities face environmental barriers and obstacles in daily life in most societies. Creating barrier-free and enabling environments for persons with disabilities is indispensable to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. Article 9 and other related articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities embodies this concept, highlighting accessibility as a precondition to realizing full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2010/13, has also called for the promotion of accessibility to all aspects of environments and to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and has emphasized the importance of mainstreaming accessibility requirements in all development efforts.

[34] See A/62/341.

[35] The 10 principles of the Global Compact include: principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses; and principle 6: [Business should uphold] the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

60. In most countries, the physical infrastructure is largely inaccessible to persons with disabilities. In order to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, measures should be undertaken to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to physical environments, eliminating obstacles and barriers to indoor and outdoor facilities.[36] It is critical to ensure that all new infrastructure built be accessible to persons with disabilities by following the universal design model, which is a design framework aimed at benefiting the widest possible range of individuals in the widest range of situations, including, for example, women during pregnancy, mothers with young children and the elderly, without the need for special or separate designs.[37]

61. The barriers of inaccessible ICT infrastructure also stand in the way of persons with disabilities, limiting opportunities and sabotaging their full inclusion and participation in society. In order to close the persistent gaps between persons with and without disabilities in access to ICT, effective use of innovative and affordable ICT, as well as upgrades of existing ICT infrastructure, are critical. In addition, it is essential to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to vital information, such as that of emergency management and related services, through enhanced access to ICT.

62. From a human development perspective, creating enabling environments for persons with disabilities means much more than developing policies pertaining to accessibility and implementing measures for building barrier-free physical environments and ICT. It requires a shift in the thinking and approach for an overall policy framework to incorporate progressive removal of barriers for the full and effective participation of all members of society in economic and social development. This shift should be accompanied by strengthened efforts to provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (including employment) and to promote their economic and social empowerment to "level the playing field". While progress has been made in this sphere, there still is an urgent need to further promote accessibility, both as a key development policy goal and an important means of strategizing the empowerment of persons with disabilities, to realize an inclusive society for all.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

63. The United Nations system has made notable progress towards mainstreaming disability in the development agenda through its support to the Governments and the international community, including through research and analysis on disability as a cross-cutting development issue. The United Nations has also strengthened its efforts towards a system-wide approach to mainstreaming disability in the policies and programmes of its respective entities, including in country programming within the United Nations operational framework. Furthermore, the role of the United Nations in forging new forms of partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, and in particular with organizations of persons with disabilities, is providing new

[36] Convention on the Rights o ersons with Disabilities, article 9, para. 1.

[37] The cost of including accessible features at the time of construction is minimal, with a study indicating that it is more cost-effective to design a barrier-free building than to renovate an existing building to make it fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Further information is available from http://www.make-development-inclusive.com.

opportunities and forums for promoting linkages between disability and the mainstream development agenda.

64. The international community should seize every opportunity to include disability as a cross-cutting development issue in the global development agenda. In particular, as the final deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals draws near, the international community has before it the opportunity to ensure that disability is included in any emerging development framework beyond 2015.

65. Inclusion of disability should be ensured in all aspects of the emerging post-2015 United Nations development framework, as well as in the dialogues and outcomes of relevant United Nations development conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012.

66. Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders should accelerate the efforts to apply internationally recommended guidelines, principles and methodologies for collecting and analysing data and statistics on the situation of persons with disabilities in economic and social development. These efforts will result in improved, internationally comparable data and statistics on disability. Such data should then be submitted through appropriate reporting mechanisms within the United Nations system in order to provide a basis for analytical studies and reporting on disability data and statistics. In turn, the United Nations, based on such data and statistics and many decades of experience in monitoring and evaluation of development issues, should develop a global periodic report on the situation of persons with disabilities in development, as an official publication.

67. Training modules and workshops pertaining to inclusion of disability and persons with disabilities in the development agenda for the United Nations system throughout its Headquarters, regions and country offices, as well as its implementing partners, should be developed and carried out to raise awareness, knowledge and competencies, with a view to accelerating the mainstreaming of disability and the disability perspective in development activities.

68. In the context of mainstreaming disability in international development cooperation, the capacity of the development community, including policymakers, practitioners and experts, should be strengthened in order to promote understanding of the economic and social situation of persons with disabilities and the barriers they face in the context of development processes. In this regard, Governments and the United Nations system should ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes.

69. Mainstreaming disability is emerging as an important priority for many development partners. In this respect, the United Nations should continue to play its role in coordinating efforts at the national and regional levels to scale up efforts by forging partnerships for international cooperation between the United Nations system and regional and subregional organizations.

70. Strengthening partnerships for mainstreaming disability could open up new opportunities and approaches to promote inclusive development. The United Nations and its partners could enhance cooperation with national and local partners

to optimize development outcomes for persons with disabilities in a given socio-economic, cultural and political context.

71. The role of the private sector should be further explored, in the context of partnerships with the United Nations system in its effort to achieve global development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities.

72. Governments and the United Nations system, in collaboration with other stakeholders, should accelerate efforts to ensure accessibility to both physical environments and ICT and to step up policy development and implementing measures for progressive removal of barriers for all members of society. These efforts should be in tandem with policy development and implementing measures for the empowerment of persons with disabilities in society and in development.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

Monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, contained in the annex to its resolution 48/96. The 22 Standard Rules provide a framework to further implement the goals of "equality" and "full participation" of persons with disabilities in social life and development, as set forth in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 37/52.

2. Section IV, paragraph 2, of the Standard Rules stipulates that the rules should be monitored within the framework of the sessions of the Commission for Social Development. The appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor their implementation was also envisaged in that paragraph.

3. In 2009, the Secretary-General appointed Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa) Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development for the period from 2009 to 2011. In February 2010, Mr. Chalklen delivered an oral report to the Commission at its forty-eighth session, in keeping with Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/20, in which the Council requested the Special Rapporteur to submit an annual report to the Commission for Social Development.

4. The Special Rapporteur presented his annual report to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-ninth session in February 2011 (E/CN.5/2011/9).

* E/CN.5/2012/1, to be issued.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development on monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

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I. Introduction

1. This is my second report to the Commission for Social Development, covering my activities pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutions 2008/20 and 2011/27 and in accordance with the provisions set forth in section IV of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.[1]

2. I wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Commission for Social Development for entrusting me with the important role of Special Rapporteur on disability.

3. I would like to extend my gratitude to all Governments that have supported my work during the current period and, in particular, the Governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden for their continuous support and generous contributions.

4. My sincere gratitude goes to the staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat for their excellent support in assisting me to carry out my mandate throughout the current period.

5. I would also like to thank other United Nations agencies and civil society organizations for their cooperation and support.

II. Background

6. The international normative framework that guides my work consists of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons,[2] the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[3]

7. In addition to this normative framework, a number of other relevant human rights and development instruments play an important role in defining the broad parameters of my work.

8. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities,[4] discussed the progress made thus far towards the integration of the disability perspective in development processes, but noted that the rights and concerns of persons with disabilities remained to be integrated into mainstream development processes. The report also highlighted opportunities to ensure the inclusion of disability in the global development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

9. Two key publications that were released in 2011, the *World Report on Disability*, published by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, and *Community-based Rehabilitation Guidelines*, published by WHO, both provide a reference for a better understanding of the situation of, and challenges faced by, persons with disabilities.

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[1] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex.

[2] A/37/351/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex, sect. VIII, recommendation 1 (IV).

[3] General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

[4] A/66/128.

10. The *World Report on Disability* estimates that the number of persons with disabilities in the world has increased and that the previous estimate of 10 per cent was revised upwards to 15 per cent, yielding a global figure of more than 1 billion persons with disabilities.

11. The combined population of the least developed countries is 800 million, which makes the number of persons with disabilities hard to ignore. The increased emphasis on inclusive development by all stakeholders makes it imperative that decision makers at all levels include persons with disabilities in their development initiatives.

III. Activities of the Special Rapporteur on disability

A. Monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules and synergy between other disability-specific instruments

12. Within my mandate, I continue my work in monitoring, promoting and implementing the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in the context of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other human rights and disability-specific instruments, having a positive impact on the development of national policies to further advance the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive development.

13. During the period covered by the present report, and in conjunction with my missions to attend a number of international conferences and events, such as the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) seminar in Oslo in February 2011, the meeting of the Commonwealth Secretariat in New Delhi in January 2011 and the fourth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York in September 2011, I met with representatives of the Governments of China, India, Norway, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Thailand and the United States of America, as well as representatives of civil society organizations. I discussed the status of implementation of the Standard Rules, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and other disability-specific instruments.

14. In March 2011, I had consultations with senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland, where I also discussed my priorities in promoting the twin-track approach of equality and the empowerment of persons with disabilities and advancement of disability-inclusive international cooperation.

15. I am encouraged by the increase in the number of States that have ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol. I commend the ongoing efforts by Member States and civil society to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in society and development, in line with the Convention.

16. These key findings of my missions and the information provided in the present report indicate that the Standard Rules, together with other disability-specific instruments, continue to provide practical guidance for Member States in equalizing opportunities for persons with disabilities in society and development.

17. Effective steps taken by a number of Member States in the current reporting period for the implementation of the Standard Rules and other disability-specific instruments include establishing national coordination mechanisms, promoting accessibility, rehabilitation, education and access to social protection, as well as promoting international cooperation.

B. Mainstreaming disability in development

1. Member States

18. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 2011/27, requested that I promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability issues in development programmes and strategies at the national, regional and international levels.

19. In conjunction with General Assembly resolution 65/186 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/27, it was requested that my mandate and its activities contribute to the proposed high-level meeting on disability and development to be held during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and its preparation, taking account of the priorities of the international community in strengthening efforts to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.

20. In February 2011, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), in cooperation with my office, organized a seminar in Oslo on mainstreaming persons with disabilities in development cooperation. More than 60 representatives of Governments, United Nations agencies, multilateral and national donors, and disabled people's organizations attended the seminar.

21. The purpose of the seminar was to identify continuing barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation, and to find possible solutions to the obstacles.

22. The seminar recommended that focal points be established in development aid agencies or ministries responsible for disability. The seminar also recommended that organizations of persons with disabilities be strengthened and included as partners in all aspects of development cooperation.

23. Some of the key barriers identified were the lack of awareness concerning the situation and needs of persons with disabilities, the unavailability of adequate statistics and indicators related to disability, and the absence of political will for change.

24. In its conclusions, the seminar also noted the lack of knowledge and experience in mainstreaming disability that could guide development agencies. The Australian Government's Agency for International Development (AusAID) was cited as an example of best practice in mainstreaming disability in development.

25. The Government of Norway also organized an international conference on humanitarian disasters and persons with disabilities in May 2011. The objective of the conference was to address the exclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster relief, and the lack of inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster-preparedness initiatives.

26. I concur with the results of the conference that the following issues require urgent attention:

(a) Discriminatory attitudes result in the lack of inclusion of disability in emergency-related responses and recovery efforts;

(b) Emergency situations result in dramatic changes to the community, and reconstruction processes often create new barriers for persons with disabilities;

(c) Women and girls with disabilities should be protected from sexual abuse and violence during emergency situations;

(d) Disaggregated data on persons with disabilities should be collected;

(e) Organizations of persons with disabilities should be consulted in emergency management situations and during reconstruction processes.

2. United Nations system

27. The United Nations system has undertaken several initiatives and responded positively to the need for mainstreaming disability in the system's work and programmes.

28. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat is the global focal point on disability in the United Nations system. The Department continued its work in supporting intergovernmental dialogues concerning disability through the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development, and the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

29. In conjunction with supporting intergovernmental processes, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided forums for stakeholders to exchange new ideas and develop strategic partnerships in the field of disability. I participated in, or directly contributed to, some of the forums, ranging from HIV and AIDS prevalence and disability to the empowerment of persons with disabilities through sports, the rights of children and youth with disabilities, and educational and employment opportunities for women and girls with disabilities. I commend those forums and, in particular, the panel discussion on "Making education a reality for children with disabilities", organized by the Department in collaboration with the World Bank and WHO in July 2011, on the occasion of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council's annual ministerial review.

30. I also intend to collaborate with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in its technical cooperation. For instance, in November 2010 and September 2011, the Department collaborated with its partners and conducted two successful capacity-building workshops, in Trinidad and Tobago and Croatia, respectively. Through the evolving new network in Africa on disability and the envisaged African Disability Forum, I look forward to working with the Department in contributing to the capacity-building of diverse stakeholders in Africa.

31. Within the United Nations system, I also wish to collaborate closely with the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its effort to implement the United Nations Joint Strategy and World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which will provide

further support to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the country level.

32. In June 2011, I attended the 18th annual meeting of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, attended by mandate holders, special representatives, independent experts and the Chairs of working groups. The meeting provided an opportunity to interact and network with other United Nations mandate holders to discuss how disability issues could be mainstreamed into their respective areas of responsibility.

33. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) now have full-time staff as disability focal points in their organizations. The concerns of children with disabilities are receiving greater attention within UNICEF and UNDP.

34. UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNICEF have been working towards the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund, a multi-agency trust fund that will support disability mainstreaming initiatives within the United Nations system.

35. In June 2011, I supported WHO and the World Bank in the official launch of the *World Report on Disability* in New York. The report is comprehensive in its overview of the state of disability in the world and highlights challenges for the future. The report was well received by the international community.

36. The *World Report on Disability* highlights some of the most common barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities, such as:

(a) Inadequate policies and standards for disability-inclusive society and development;

(b) Negative attitudes towards disability;

(c) Lack of provision of services and service delivery for persons with disabilities;

(d) Inadequate funding for disability-inclusive development;

(e) Lack of accessibility to the physical environment and information and communications technologies;

(f) Lack of consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities;

(g) Lack of statistical data and evidence-based research on disability.

37. In a meeting with the United Nations independent expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, I provided comments on the expert's report on Haiti (A/HRC/17/42) and noted the lack of provision for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the reconstruction process. I have discussed the report with others in the disability community with a view to having an impact on the reconstruction process in Haiti.

38. The United Nations system continues to respond positively to the needs of persons with disabilities and to the mandates emanating from the international normative framework on disability. However, more can be done, such as developing a monitoring mechanism within the United Nations system on issues such as

employment of persons with disabilities, accessibility of the United Nations, environment and accessibility of information, and the oversight of the inclusion of disability in the development programmes of the United Nations.

3. Development in Africa

39. I supported the African Union Commission for Social Development in convening its meeting in Harare from 7 to 9 September 2011 to discuss ways in which the African Rehabilitation Institute could be revived and strengthened.

40. The purpose of the meeting was to address the need to restructure the African Rehabilitation Institute in line with recent global developments in the field of disability. The Governing Board recommended that the Institute be renamed and that it become part of the African Union Commission for Social Development. In future, all States members of the African Union will be part of the Institute.

41. The meeting also decided to establish a Disability Advisory Board, and the secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities and continental organizations of persons with disabilities will be part of it.

42. Such developments will lead to greater integration among the different organizations working in the area of disability, and to better coordination of activities.

43. In July 2011, I was invited to attend the XVI World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Durban, South Africa, and to speak at the opening ceremony, along with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I addressed the importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a tool for advancing the rights of the deaf community globally, regionally, nationally and locally. I also emphasized the need for greater attention to be focused on the concerns of deaf Africans in areas where Africa lags behind in the development, recognition and education of the deaf. I was pleased to note that, in its resolution,[5] the Congress committed itself to building organizations of deaf persons in Africa and to assisting with the development of sign language in African countries.

44. In October 2011, Disabled Peoples' International held its eighth World Assembly in Durban, South Africa, under the theme: "Disability Movement United in creating a society for all through the United Nations Disability Convention and the Millennium Development Goals". I participated at the plenary session and drew attention to the urgent need for disability inclusion in all aspects of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as in other internationally agreed development goals, in the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

45. It is also encouraging to note that countries in Africa are responding to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In a recent case in Zambia, the High Court was petitioned by organizations of persons with disabilities to address the inaccessibility of voting stations during elections. The Court ruled in favour of the organizations of persons with disabilities and stated that future elections should be made fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

[5] www.wfdeaf.org/news/congress-resolution.

C. Fostering disability-inclusive international cooperation

46. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 2008/20, requested the Special Rapporteur on disability to act as a catalyst to promote international and technical cooperation on disability issues, including by identifying strategic areas for the exchange and sharing of expertise, best practices, knowledge, information and relevant technologies.

47. During the reporting period, I continued to promote and support efforts for disability-inclusive development cooperation, as one of my top priorities. For example, I actively participated as resource person and contributed to debates organized during the sixteenth session of the Human Rights Council and the fourth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, both focused on international cooperation and article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

48. In March 2011, I attended the third annual interactive debate on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, held at the sixteenth session of the Human Rights Council. The theme of the meeting was article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on which I presented a brief paper that focused on the need for data collection and cooperation in the field of scientific knowledge, as well as on the need for best practices in disability to be shared among Member States.

49. The Human Rights Council, in resolution 16/15[6] entitled "Role of international cooperation in support of national efforts for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities", the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a study on the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Special Rapporteur on disability.

50. In mainstreaming disability into international cooperation, it is important to take cognizance of both mainstreaming disability in all international cooperation and having disability-specific cooperation, following a twin-track approach of equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

51. The annual Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has developed into a global forum for the exchange of experiences, learning and sharing good practices, and global networking. There were over 40 side events to the fourth session of the Conference of States Parties in September 2011. Those events generated great interest among all stakeholders on priority disability issues and provided a wealth of information and knowledge, from which I learned a great deal and on the basis of which I intend to strengthen my programmes and activities.

52. At the fourth session of the Conference of States Parties, I made a statement at the round table on international cooperation,[7] which emphasized the importance of dedicated focal points in development agencies, staffed by experienced senior personnel who would be responsible for the development and monitoring of indicators on disability-inclusive development. I also noted the lack of consultations

[6] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/66/53), chap. I.

[7] www.un.org/disabilities/documents/COP/cosp4_presentation_chalklen_1.doc.

with organizations of persons with disabilities by both donor and recipient countries, which can lead to a lack of both awareness and knowledge of disability, causing disability to fall off of the priority list. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities both emphasize the importance of consultation with disabled people's organizations.

53. I had the opportunity, in December 2010, to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, where I was invited to speak at their annual event on human rights. Subsequently, the Commonwealth Secretariat invited me to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions held in New Delhi in the following month. The meeting provided me with the opportunity to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and encourage technical cooperation among States members of the Commonwealth.

54. In March 2011, during my meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland in Helsinki, I discussed the twin-track approach of equality and the empowerment of persons with disabilities, and commended their continued support for disability and human rights-related activities globally.

55. The establishment of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Multi-Donor Trust Fund should greatly enhance international cooperation in the field of disability. I am encouraged by the support the initiative has received from agencies within the United Nations system. I look forward to assisting the Fund, whose key role is in building the capacity of Governments and supporting organizations of persons with disabilities.

56. Much progress has been made towards the establishment of the African Disability Forum. I have held consultative meetings with potential partners, such as the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. One of our proposed joint projects is the biannual publication of an "African Review of Disability Law".

D. Promoting awareness-raising and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules and other international instruments relating to disability

57. The Economic and Social Council, in resolutions 2008/20 and 2011/27, requested the Special Rapporteur on disability to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules and other disability-specific instruments.

58. I continue to take every opportunity to promote the implementation and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as other instruments that relate to persons with disabilities.

59. In June 2011, I participated in the 18th annual meeting of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. I met individually with other Special Rapporteurs with mandates on violence against women, extreme poverty, education and torture,

as well as with the independent expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Haiti.

60. The Human Rights Council, in resolution 17/11,[6] invited OHCHR to prepare a thematic analytical study on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability, in consultation with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on disability. I met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women to discuss the thematic study and the process of consultations.

61. I have had a number of consultations concerning the status of persons with disabilities in their respective countries with Government officials of Member States, including China, Finland, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden and Thailand. I am planning to consult further with the Governments of China, the Philippines and Thailand in December 2011, to continue raising awareness and promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules and other disability-specific instruments.

62. I also had specific meetings with development agencies such as the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). During these meetings, I discussed support for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Standard Rules and other disability-specific instruments, and encouraged the agencies to use the twin-track approach of promoting equality and the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

E. Collaborating with civil society

63. In my 2010 report to the Commission for Social Development, I stated my intention to work closely with and consult civil society organizations globally (E/CN.5/2011/9, para. 75).

64. During the process of consultation with civil society organizations, the overriding issue of inclusive development arose in all discussions held in the current reporting period. There were also high expectations that the proposed high-level meeting could elicit significant commitments from Governments and international development agencies for mainstreaming disability in all aspects of development.

65. I convened a Panel of Experts' meeting of representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, which was held on 9 September 2011, the last day of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convening of the meeting was based on the recommendations in the Standard Rules.

66. The Panel of Experts focused its discussion on my current activities, the proposed high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability to be held during the sixty-seventh session, priorities of the workplan of the Special Rapporteur for the next term, and the way forward on future collaboration between the Special Rapporteur and the Panel of Experts.

67. The Panel expressed its interest in participating in the planning of the proposed high-level meeting on disability and in drawing its attention to disability-inclusive development.

68. The Panel also discussed the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio plus 20), which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012.

F. Vulnerable groups within the disability community

69. In my previous report to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-ninth session (E/CN.5/2011/9, paras. 55-57), I expressed my intention to focus on vulnerable groups, such as women and girls with disabilities, persons with mental disabilities, the deaf and those in situations of risk, such as humanitarian disasters.

70. In my address at the opening ceremony of the XVI World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in July 2011, I focused on increasing awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities among the deaf community. I also had meetings with the President of the World Federation to discuss future collaboration.

71. I met with the Pan-African Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and provided them with assistance in building the capacity of their organization and strengthening their network in Africa. Later, I participated in a seminar held in Cape Town, South Africa, where the Pan-African Network met to plan its future activities.

IV. Observations and conclusions

72. An analysis of the past year demonstrates a vibrant global disability arena with very positive developments. One of the key developments was the release of the *World Report on Disability*, which states that, despite persistent attempts, including the 1 billion persons with disabilities in the mainstream development agenda remains a challenge.

73. Disability continues to be on the sidelines of the global development agenda. However, I am encouraged by activities such as the NORAD seminar in February 2011 and the side event to be organized by USAID in November 2011 at the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Busan, Republic of Korea. The side event will promote disability-inclusive development to a key target audience.

74. The General Assembly, in resolution 65/186 entitled "Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond", requested the Secretary-General to submit information with a view to convening a high-level meeting on disability and development at the sixty-seventh session. I am eager to be a part of such a groundbreaking meeting. Civil society organizations are keen to participate, and I fully support their inclusion. All concerned are hopeful that the high-level meeting will result in firm commitments from Member States on disability-inclusive development.

75. In my previous report, I recommended that United Nations agencies should establish disability focal points in their organizations (E.CN.5/2011/9, para. 67 (d)).

I am pleased to see that UNICEF and UNDP have established such focal points in their respective organizations.

V. Recommendations

76. I wish to make the following recommendations:

(a) Member States should support the proposed high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development during its sixty-seventh session at the highest level and commit to disability-inclusive development;

(b) Greater attention should be paid to the post-Millennium Development Goals development agenda, and the inclusion of the disability perspective in the mainstream development agenda;

(c) Disability should be an integral part of the development agenda for both donor and recipient organizations;

(d) There should be better coordination and dialogue between development agencies and organizations of persons with disabilities, to ensure greater awareness of the concerns of persons with disabilities and to share knowledge and information;

(e) Member States should support the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Multi-Donor Trust Fund and its objectives.

VI. Planned activities for 2012

77. I remain committed to fulfilling my mandate as the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development for monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and to continuing as an interface in cooperating with and supporting Member States, the United Nations system and civil society. In addition to monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules and raising awareness of those Rules and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, I will continue to promote greater synergy between relevant disability, development and human rights instruments.

78. I will continue to facilitate the establishment of the African Disability Forum and engage in consultations with all relevant institutions in Africa and beyond.

79. I will follow up on my first meeting with the mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and the Special Procedures Division to deepen our dialogue and enhance our working relationship, with a view to raising awareness concerning the situation of persons with disabilities and conducting joint initiatives, where possible.

80. In response to the request of the Economic and Social Council, I will actively contribute to, and participate in, the proposed high-level meeting on disability and relevant processes.